

CROSSING PATHS MONUMENT

The settlement that would become California's first city, San José, was established on the east bank of the Guadalupe River in 1777. Here, where el Pueblo de San José was founded, Native Americans and Europeans crossed paths. This blending of civilizations is symbolically illustrated in a design composed of the names of the earliest European settlers and Native American (Oljone/Ohlone) people.

The early Ohlone people lived in independent villages, which were bound by a common language and a communal way of life. Navigating in canoes made of tule reeds, the Ohlone made good use of the Guadalupe, the bay, and the area's numerous fresh water marshes, and thrived without depleting these resources. With the arrival of the Spanish, the game-filled woodlands and shaded banks that the Ohlone had known for thousands of years began to be depleted.

The Ohlone had a large population and lived in a bountiful land that they managed well, producing high yields of nuts, seeds, and acorns, marking the beginning of San Jose's agricultural heritage. However, they did not cultivate the land in a way that the Spanish understood. Gradually the Europeans introduced the Ohlone to their way of life, "employing" many as agricultural laborers to help the settlers build dams, dig irrigation ditches, and plant and harvest their crops. Early on, the crops were often lost to the floodwaters of the Guadalupe.

This mix of the Ohlone and Spanish cultures created a unique blending of lifestyles and traditions. To this day, San José continues as a true "melting pot" for people from all over the world.